

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant acknowledges receipt of the Office Action dated April 20, 2004 in which the Examiner: (1) rejected claims 1-16 and 23-29 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) and (2) allowed claims 17-20, 22, 30 and 31. Applicant notes with appreciation the allowance of claims 17-20, 22, 30 and 31.

Status of the Claims

Claims 3, 7, 18, 20, 23-25, 28 and 29 are in original form.

Claims 2, 11, 12, 13, 15 and 16 are currently amended.

Claims 4-6, 14, 17, 19, 22, 30 and 31 were previously amended.

Claims 1, 8, 9, 10, 21, 26 and 27 have been canceled.

Claim Rejections Under 35 USC § 103(a)

Claims 1-16 and 23-29 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Baldwin et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,042,152 (hereinafter *Baldwin*) in view of Applicant's Admitted Prior Art (pages 2-5). The Examiner takes the position that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the liner assembly of *Baldwin* to employ a metal liner assembly in view of Applicant's disclosure regarding metal liners.

In the Office Action, the Examiner suggests that a primary distinction between Applicant's invention and *Baldwin* is that Applicant's elastomeric tip is a separate element from the transition ring. Accordingly, the Examiner indicated that claims 4 and 12 may be allowable if amended to reflect that the elastomeric tip is between the MCI and the transition ring, i.e. to reflect that the elastomeric tip and the transition ring are different elements. With this response, the claims have been amended in accordance with the Examiner's suggestions. In particular, claim 2 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of claim 1, and to recite "wherein the transition ring and the elastomeric tip are different elements of the composite riser". Further, claim 12 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of claim 8 and claim 9 and to recite that the elastomeric tip is provided between the MCI and a transition ring of the liner assembly. Accordingly, Applicant submits that independent claim 2 and independent claim 12 are in condition for allowance over the art of record. Additionally, pending claims 3-7, 11, 13-16, 23-25, 28 and 29 each depend from and incorporate the limitations of either independent claim 2 or independent claim 12. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims.

CONCLUSION

Consideration of the foregoing amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the application, and withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested by Applicant. No new matter is introduced by way of the amendment. It is believed that each ground of rejection raised in the Office Action dated April 20, 2004 has been fully addressed. If any fee is due as a result of the filing of this paper please appropriately charge such fee to Deposit Account Number 50-1515 of Conley Rose, P.C., Texas. If a petition for extension of time is necessary in order for this paper to be deemed timely filed, please consider this a petition therefore.

If a telephone conference would facilitate the resolution of any issue or expedite the prosecution of the application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the telephone number given below.

Respectfully submitted,
CONLEY ROSE, P.C.

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